



HDRB

Historic or Design Review Board



Historic District Review Application Process

(Revised March, 2005)

How do I know if my property is in the Blacksburg Historic District?

Please refer to the map included in this brochure for a general indication of district boundaries. If you have questions, especially if your property is near a district boundary, please call the Planning & Engineering Department for clarification. If your property is in the Historic District, a building or sign permit cannot be issued until the proposal is reviewed by either staff or the review board in accordance with the appropriate guidelines. In cases of demolition or relocation, application must be made for a Certificate of Appropriateness prior

to review Applications for a review are needed 10 days prior a meeting.

How do I know if my property is a contributing structure within the historic district?

The Town maintains a list of contributing structures within the historic district. If your property appears on this list, it is considered a contributing structure. Contributing properties are typically listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register; or the Nation Register of Historic Landmarks; or are at least 50 years old, have not had any major exterior alterations changing the original architectural character and have had an historic survey which documents the structure as contributing to the historic district. If you are unsure if your property is a contributing structure, please call the Planning & Engineering Department for verification.

Are there financial benefits to being in a historic district?

A twelve year tax exemption from Town real estate taxes on the value added to a structure due to renovation is available for properties within the Blacksburg Historic District. Requirements are:

- Property must be **at least 20 years old**.
- The cost of the project must be **at least \$5,000.00**.
- Total square footage of the structures **cannot be increased by more than 15%**.
- A building permit must be issued **prior to beginning any construction**.
- Renovation **must conform with the historic district guidelines** as interpreted by the Historic or Design Review Board.

Additionally, state and federal assistance is available for renovations that conform to the Secretary of Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation. For more information please contact the Department of Planning and Engineering at 540-961-1126.

What is exempt from review?

Repainting, except painting of masonry that has been unpainted; interior alterations; minor repairs that maintain the integrity of existing walls, roofs, windows, doors, fences, and other property features *where no change in design or material is proposed*; Planting grass, trees, and shrubs.

What is subject to Administrative Review?

Administrative Review is completed by Staff instead of the Board. Exterior alterations for non-contributing structures, such as; fences in the rear and side yards; decks in rear yards; replacement of side or rear stairs, stoops or porches; replacement of windows, doors and shutters where different material is proposed provided that any enlargement or redesign of windows visible from the street requires review by the board; demolition of noncontributing accessory structures; and any construction or alterations not visible from a public street. Additions to structures are not an Administrative Review. Appeals of denials by the Administrator are made to the Review Board.

What is subject to review by the Historic or Design Review Board?

Any other construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, or erection, of any building or structure within this district shall require a review by the Board. Such projects may include, but are not limited to, exterior alterations to contributing structures and additions to all structures; new construction; relocation or demolition. Only reviews dealing with relocations or demolitions are binding decisions and approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness is required. All other reviews are advisory. Appeals of the decisions of the Review Board are made to Town Council.

How do I apply for a Review or a Certificate of Appropriateness?

Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) may be obtained from the Planning & Engineering Department, 300 South Main St., 3rd floor of the municipal building. There is no

application fee. Applicants for a COA need to provide thorough documentation to allow a full review. Applications for reviews not requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness should include at least a brief narrative explaining the location and intent of the project, elevations and site plans of the affected areas and proposed materials.

Where do I meet with the Historic or Design Review Board?

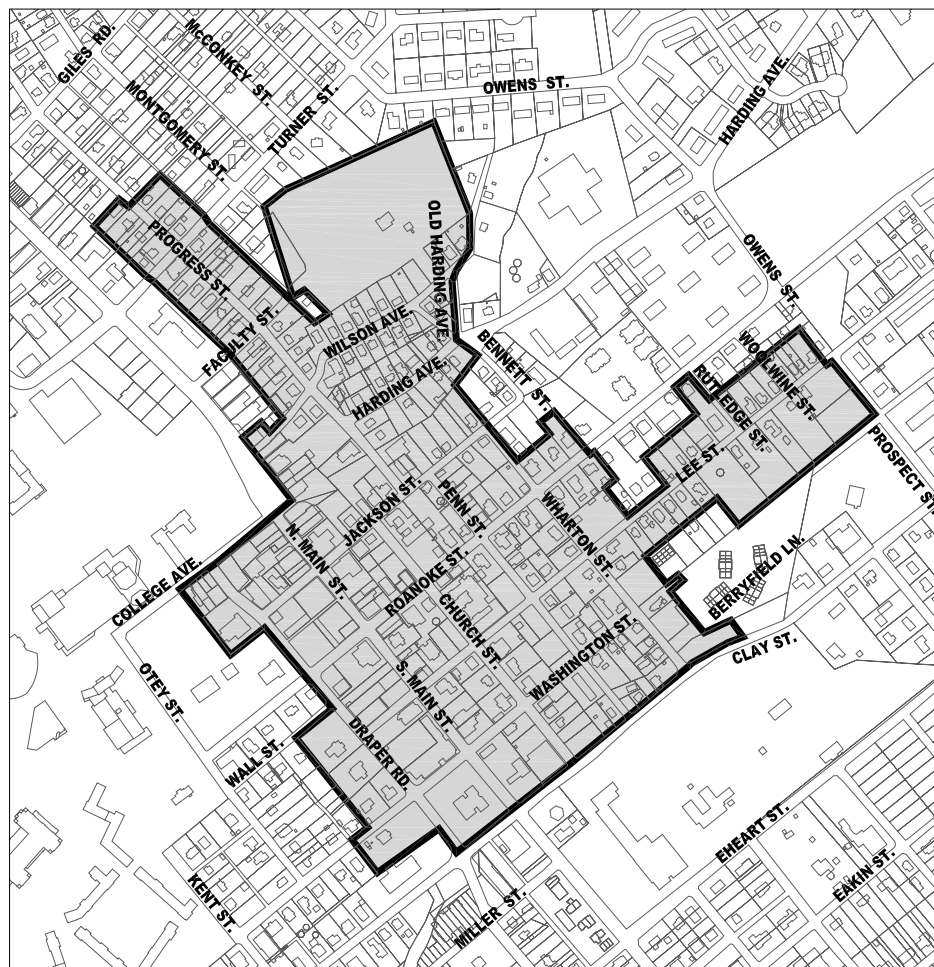
The Review Board meets at 4:30 P.M. in the Town Council Conference Room (1st Floor of Municipal Building) on the second Monday of each month. Meetings may also be held on the fourth Monday of each month, as needed. All interested parties may present their views. Information on pending applications is available to the public and may be examined in the Planning & Engineering Department prior to the meetings.

Do I need to be present at the Historic or Design Review Board meeting?

Either you or your representative should be present at the meeting in case members of the Review Board have questions about the application. If the applicant is not present, the review process could be postponed.

How do I appeal a decision rendered by the Historic or Design Review Board?

Decisions rendered by the Review Board are advisory in nature and do not need to be appealed with the exception of Certificates of Appropriateness for demolitions or relocations. These decisions are binding and may be appealed to Town Council by either the applicant or any person aggrieved. Written notice of appeal, setting forth the grounds of appeal, must be submitted to the Zoning Administrator within 30 days after the decision was rendered by the Review Board. Town Council will schedule a public hearing and shall



decide on an appeal within 60 days of receipt by the Zoning Administrator. Failure of Town Council to decide the appeal within this time constitutes a denial of the appeal. Town Council may uphold, reverse, or modify the Review Board's decision. Appeals of binding decisions by the Zoning Administrator operate in the same fashion with an appeal to the Review Board.

How can I get help on an application before presentation to the Historic or Design Review Board?

The Review Board makes itself available to meet with applicants informally to work out various

aspects of a project, prior to filing a formal application or board presentation. This is especially useful for larger construction projects, where there are greater design challenges to integrate the proposed changes into the existing built environment. The Review Board is comprised of at least one registered architect and two members with professional training in either historic preservation, history, planning, archeology, architecture, or a related field. The Review Board has subcommittees which will meet with applicants prior to presentation to the full board as appropriate. To initiate an informal review, please contact the Planning & Engineering Department at 961-1126. There is no application fee for an informal review, but potential applicants should submit sufficient documentation to allow an adequate review of the proposed changes.

Are private citizens the only ones who have to follow these procedures?

The Review Board provides advisory review of projects undertaken by the Town of Blacksburg. This requirement gives citizens an opportunity to comment on public investments in their neighborhoods.

How do I obtain additional information on the Certificate of Appropriateness application and review process?

For additional information, you may contact the Planning & Engineering Department, Town of Blacksburg, Municipal Building, 300 South Main Street, Blacksburg, VA 24060. (540) 961-1126. Information is also provided in the Blacksburg Historic District Guidelines handbook and pamphlets as well as at the public library.